



Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea Yun Byung-se, Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand Tanasak Patimapragorn, Ambassador Vuk Žugić from the Serbian OSCE Chairmanship and OSCE Secretary General Lambert Zannier opened the 2015 OSCE Asian Conference by emphasizing the need for increased co-operation between the OSCE and its Asian Partners for Co-operation in tackling today's non-traditional and transnational threats.

Pointing to the meeting's logo, which uses a traditional Korean motif, Foreign Minister Yun said, "Europe and Asia are "under the same roof" – interconnected and interdependent for security. So, as we commemorate 40 years of the adoption of Helsinki Final Act, strengthening the collaboration between the OSCE and Asia, addressing common challenges, and working together to enhance the security environment in East Asia would be a meaningful achievement."

Minister Burkhalter added, "Security in the OSCE region is inseparably linked to that of its neighbours. The same holds true for security in the Asia-Pacific. This is why Switzerland believes that strengthening security dialogue and co-operation between Europe and Asia will be to the benefit of all. The OSCE should be a bridge not just between the Euro-Atlantic and the Eurasian area but also between Europe and further parts of Asia."

Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Patimapragorn agreed that the OSCE Asian Conference was a good opportunity to find ways to enhance interaction between security-related arrangements in Asia and Europe, and offered to host the 2016 OSCE Asian Conference in Thailand.

Speaking on behalf of the OSCE Chairmanship, Ambassador Žugić said, "The OSCE has accumulated impressive experience on international security issues. We are ready to share our experience with our Asian Partners, be it in Vienna or through the development of further contacts with regional institutions."

Secretary General Zannier reiterated the OSCE's willingness to foster interregional interaction. "There are a number of security frameworks that could interact with the OSCE to share best practices and lessons learnt. ASEAN and its Regional Forum, the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, and the East Asia Summit are all good examples, and the OSCE is ready to explore co-operation opportunities with them as well as with the Northeast Asia Peace and Co-operation Initiative."

*Photo by: Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Korea*